Method and Apparatus for Accessing Information, Computer Programs and Electronic Communications Across Multiple Computing Devices Using a Graphical User Interface

Abstract:

A GUI containing a panel along each of its edges is produced within a computer's display. Each of the four panels are always visible and accessible within the GUI and contain items that display or reference network-based information, communication, navigational systems, computer programs, and other items. These items have been assigned to the panels based upon a hierarchal containment system which, in the preferred embodiment of the invention, uses the categories "people, places, things, and home" as its first logical grouping of the various items and services a user would seek to utilize within the GUI. This organizational system, and its associated visual representation within the panels, enables the GUI to be displayed and operated within multiple computer devices, even though the designs of those devices may include a wide range of display and control systems. This consistency across various computing devices enables a user to quickly apply knowledge gained from having used the GUI on another computing device. Furthermore, the items presented within the GUI, as well as the GUI's configuration, are stored in, and retrieved from, a networked "server" computer thereby enabling a user to produce and access their familiar GUI workspace and items using a variety of networked computer devices. The GUI therefore may be accessed within multiple computing devices and provide access to information, computer programs, and electronic communications.